

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of ~~altering~~ forming a stochastic image pattern in a given region of pile fabric having a multitude of projecting fibers of a given length, the method comprising:

(a) illuminating the pile fabric at spaced areas in [[a]] the stochastic image pattern to shorten the fibers within the area of illumination,
wherein the height reduction of the fibers within each of the illuminated areas corresponds to a dot density of a stochastic image; and

(b) maintaining the given length of fibers adjacent the illuminated area, wherein the given length of at least 25% of the fibers in the given region of pile fabric within the stochastic image pattern is maintained.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising providing the spaced areas at a distance selected to maintain a hand of the pile fabric.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising shortening substantially all the fibers within an illuminated area.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising illuminating the spaced areas by a circular pattern.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising illuminating at least 25 areas per inch.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising substantially eliminating the fibers within an illuminated area.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein illuminating the pile fabric includes illuminating one of a polyester fiber, a napped fiber, a flocked fiber, a fleece fiber, or a corduroy wale.

8. (Currently amended) A method of imparting a contour to a given region of a pile fabric, the pile fabric having a multitude of projecting fibers of an original height, the method comprising:

(a) illuminating the given region at a plurality of spaced illuminating areas in a dithered image with a laser to shorten the fibers within the illuminated areas, wherein each illuminated area being is spaced from an adjacent illuminated area by less than 1000 microns, and wherein the height reduction of the fibers within each of the illuminated areas corresponds to a dot density of a stochastic image; and

(b) maintaining original fiber height in a non-illuminated area.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising selecting an energy density within the illuminated area to melt a length of the fibers within the illuminated area.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising selecting an energy density, illumination area and duration to shorten the fibers within the illuminated area.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising substantially removing the fibers within the illuminated area.

17. (Currently amended) A method of laser treating of a fleece, comprising:

(a) illuminating spaced areas in a stochastic image pattern to reduce a fiber height within the illuminated area, wherein the reduced fiber height within each of the illuminated areas corresponds to a dot density of a stochastic image; and

(b) spacing the illuminated area a sufficient distance to preserve the hand of the fleece.